PRESS RELEASE

The steel industry calls for a holistic approach to water policies

Brussels, 15 April 2015 – The World Steel Association (worldsteel) has published its position paper on water management in the steel industry highlighting that local authorities are the most competent regulatory body for the management of water as policies need to be based on local conditions. With increasing recognition of the importance of water issues globally, the management of water resources is one of the most important sustainability challenges for the steel industry.

Edwin Basson, Director General of worldsteel said: “The steel industry takes its responsibility for water management seriously and is constantly evaluating how best to use water, finding improvement both in conservation and reuse. Even though the steel industry uses large quantities of water, very little water is actually consumed. Around 90% of water used in the steel industry is cleaned, cooled and returned to source. Most of the loss is due to evaporation. Water returned to rivers and other sources is often cleaner than when extracted.”

The paper explains why a holistic and balanced approach is required for water policies and what should be taken into consideration to achieve the optimal use of water resources in the steel industry. It highlights the need for a local approach and a tailor-made regulatory framework because the nature of water challenges varies significantly between regions and countries. For example, high water usage is not inherently negative provided that there is ample water available for all potential users and use does not impact on water quality. For steel producers in arid regions where water is scarce, recycling and reuse is a priority.

Water management policies suited to local conditions will help the steel industry to reduce its water footprint and improve its resource efficiency. As such, the industry will avoid unintended consequences which may include shifting the burden to other areas with a more significant impact on the environment.
To read more about the ‘Water management in the steel industry’ please visit worldsteel’ click here.

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Notes to Editors:

• The World Steel Association (worldsteel) is one of the largest and most dynamic industry associations in the world. worldsteel represents approximately 170 steel producers (including 9 of the world’s 10 largest steel companies), national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes. worldsteel members represent around 85% of world steel production.